2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. IV.

fixed wooden face, were not the results of fashion, but the action of a second nature that had been moulding him for years.

But bread and sugar hath its charms. Under its influence, he softened out and became affable. Waiting till he had finished the meal I had given him, the first of a series of questions suitable to an *ex*-pâlâl, was put. 'Is it true that Todas salute the sun?' I asked: 'tschâkh!' he replied, 'those poor fellows do so, but me,' tapping his chest, 'I, a God! why should I salute the sun?' At the time, I thought this a mere ebullition of vanity and pride, but I have since had opportunity of testing the truth of his speech. The pâlâl for the time being is not merely the casket containing divine attributes, but *is himself a God.*

Let me here describe the duties of the pâlâls and the mode of their ordination. These holy men, who must invariably be selected from the Peiki clan—the members of which style themselves Dêr mokh, or children or sons of God or of the Gods—are not in any way educated to their office; nor by mature age, superior talent, wealth, or other form of influence, are they of themselves worthy of unusual respect. They are just ordinary ignorant villagers, with sufficient shrewdness or impecuniosity, to note in the lonely post, certain very material advantages, combined with those of a more ethical nature, sufficient to compensate for the monotonous duties and isolation of the life.

No Toda being able either to read or write, and each pâlâl being as absolutely ignorant as the last, and as his own successor will be, it is quite clear there can be no dogmas of an abstruse nature, and none but the most simple rites to transmit at time of relief.

The universally defective size in the organs of Caution and Secretiveness observable in the tribe, produces an open nature of disposition, such as renders it almost impossible to conceive the existence of any very mystic rites among them. Whatever is done in these tirieris, is known to every intelligent

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

The Todas, as we have said, believe in a Heaven and Hell, the latter represented by a river or swamp full of leeches. The road to *Ámunád* (Heaven) lies across this stream, and those who have already reached their Paradise, make for new-comers a bridge formed of a single thread, which will bear a good man, but breaks under the weight of a sinner, and precipitates him into *Pálérigén** (Hell) (from *pál*, leech; *éri*, place; *gén*, water), where he remains until he has expiated his offences. I asked particularly what became of the slaughtered buffaloes meanwhile, but my informant had evidently taken this economical question into consideration, and replied that they crossed higher up, and were utilized by the dead man's family until his penance was over.

Ámunád is presided over by Ēn, a deified Toda, on whose authority the Todas believe it to be "a good place." Their description of it however does not seem attractive. They say that here men's arms and legs are poisonous, so that by culture they wear out the earth, but that in *Ámunád* the tables are turned, and the arms and legs of the cultivators are gradually worn down to the elbows and knees. When they have arrived at this stage, they return to earth. This seems a strange form of the common tradition of antagonism† between the earth and its inhabitants. As Todas cannot be accused of wearing out the earth by culture, this peculiarity of *Ámunád* probably only affects strangers. It is curious to find this prejudice against agriculture expressed in almost the same terms as far back as the time of Menu. *Cf. Institutes, X.* 84. "Agriculture is a mode of subsistence which the benevolent greatly blame: for the iron-mouthed pieces of wood not only wound the earth, but the creatures dwelling in it."

The bridge of thread recalls the Mahomedan Al Sirát, and the Badagas have a similar tradition, which receives a curious illustration from the actual practice of the Khásias, when carrying home the remains of any of their number who may have died at a distance. "The dead, they say, have not the strength or ability to wade through water, and if they trust themselves to it, would be carried down the stream, never to be recovered. They, therefore, stretch a thread of cotton from one bank to the other, and, if the breadth is great, this is kept clear of the water by sticks planted in the bed of the river, and notched at the top to receive it. If the running water should be very narrow, merely a stick is laid, or even a stalk of grass is considered sufficient to form a bridge for the dead man's soul. The line of thread is called the 'string bridge'"‡

Our own old superstition about the inability of witches to cross running water seems a reproduction of the same idea.

The Todas have no written language. Captain Harkness§ speaking of their dialect says, "It appears to be quite distinct from the languages of the surrounding countries. With the Sanscrit it has not the least affinity in roots, construction, or sound, and if I may venture to say so, as little with any Asiatic language of the present day."

Major Ross King gives a similar account in the *Journal of Anthropology* for July 1870.

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* Dr. Pope (*Outlines*, &c.) says "*pál*, an insect, is probably old Kanarese-*purlu*. It must, however, be stated that the words in which *f* is found are precisely those which it is most difficult to trace."

† Compare *Genesis* i. 28, and iv. 12; also *Moor's Hindu Pantheon*, page 246, story of Prithu and Prithivi.

‡ *On the Stone Monuments of the Khási Hill Tribes*, by Major H. H. Godwin-Austen. *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, October 1871, Vol. I., No. II.

§ *Nilgherry Hills*, p. 25.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAPTER XXIX.

OUTLINES

OF THE

TUDA GRAMMAR.

I. THE ALPHABET.

§ 1. THE TUḌA LANGUAGE has no compositions, written or unwritten, not a ballad nor a scrap of anything to indicate intellectual activity. The Tuḍas, like their buffalos, are fine animals; but they are the least cultivated of the Drâviḍian race. CHAP. XXIX. 212

No trace remains of the employment by them of any written character: it is probable, therefore, that they separated from the other Drâviḍians before the 'ur-sprache' of those tribes was reduced to writing.

§ 2. This language, of which but a very scanty fragment remains in use, has more sounds than any other Drâviḍian dialect, and some of these are peculiar to it, seeming to have been modified by the position and habits of the tribe. 194

The Tuḍas chiefly converse in the open air, calling to each other from one breezy hill-top to another. Their speech sounds like Old Kanarese spoken in the teeth of a gale of wind. 191

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

177 fellow tribesmen. To this man finger-prints came as no novelty, since his impressions were recorded both in England and America.

217 191 Writing in 1870,* Colonel W. Ross King stated that the Todas had just so much knowledge of the speech of their vassals as is demanded by the most ordinary requirements. At the present day, a few write, and many converse fluently in Tamil. The Nilgiri C.M.S. Tamil 1797 mission has extended its sphere of work to the Todas, and I cannot resist the temptation to narrate a Toda version of the story of Dives and Lazarus. The English say that once upon a time a rich man and a poor man died. At the funeral of the rich man, there was a great tamāsha (spectacle), and many buffaloes were sacrificed. But, for the funeral of the poor man, neither music nor buffaloes were provided. The English believe that in the next world the poor man was as well off as the rich man; so that, when any one dies, it is of no use spending money on the funeral ceremonies. Two mission 1797 schools have been established, one at Ootacamund, the 891 other near Paikāra. At the latter I have seen a number of children of both sexes reading elementary Tamil and English, and doing simple arithmetic.

1797 A few years ago a Toda boy was baptised at Tinnevelly, and remained there for instruction. It was hoped that he would return to the hills as an evangelist among his people.† In 1907, five young Toda women were baptised at the C.M.S. Mission chapel, Ootacamund. "They were clothed in white, with a white cloth over their heads, such as the Native Christians wear. A number of Christian Badagas had assembled to witness the ceremony, and join in the service."

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* Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills.

† Madras Diocesan Magazine, November, 1907.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

Then come two important demi-gods: a) *Kwotèn*, a man-god whose fabulous life is closely associated with one of the Toda clans (that of Pan); Rivers believed him to have been an outstanding Toda personality who was possibly posthumously deified. b) *Kwoto*, another man-god; he is closely associated with the clan of Melgarsh; among the legendary feats which he is reputed to have accomplished is that of tying down the sun between two mountains and of taking it to drink at a stream every day, in order to prove to the gods, who had challenged him, that he possessed supernatural powers.

The language spoken by the Todas is a Dravidian dialect. According to Emeneau, it is more akin to Canarese (Kanada) than to Tamil, although it cannot be said to be a very close relative of the former either. All Todas are, anyhow, bilingual, and very often even trilingual, conversing freely in Badaga with their neighbours and in Tamil with visitors from the plains. As they have no script of their own, when they occasionally want to write something (such as commemorative inscriptions on temple doors) they make use of Tamil characters. I have never seen them use Roman letters, but I have been told (by Miss C. F. Ling for instance) that although not habitual, this is sometimes also done.

The economy of the Todas is a pastoral one, large herds of great horned buffaloes, which do not resemble those of the plains, being kept for their milk and milk products. Many of these animals are quite ordinary (*putir*) but the great majority of them are pedigree cattle of a sacred nature (*postir*), their ancestry being calculated through the cows. They are believed to have been given to the tribe by the gods. They are grouped in four principal categories, each graded hierarchically. Thus the lowest category is that of the *wursulir*, then come the *nodrovair* and the *Kugvalir*, and finally, the highest and most sacred of all, the *tiir*.

Like other pastoral people, the Todas consider it degrading to take to agriculture, and repeated attempts by the Indian Government to induce them to till the soil have miserably failed. When given a field to cultivate, they usually let it out to a Badaga for a nominal sum, preferring to carry on with their animal husbandry and its semi-nomadic form of life, a tradition deeply ingrained in them and to which they are greatly attached. Most of the milk, butter and buttermilk produced by the tribe is consumed by its members, but a certain amount is sold in the local market, and the money thus earned made use of to buy other foods and everyday commodities. On the whole, the Toda